



*Fonda's Boat Headed for the Weirs*

## 'On Golden Pond' Boats Revisited

By DEAN DEXTER

A key person in the making of the popular motion picture "On Golden Pond" here three summers ago was Pat Curtin, owner of a shop which repairs and restores old wooden boats — the fancy mahogany kind popular on the Big Lake here years ago.

Curtin, who is licensed by the Coast Guard as a captain and who, as he says, has "been into boats all my life," came to the Lakes Region on vacation three years ago. Just a few weeks later, he was contacted by the movie's production company to work on the film. "On Golden Pond" has since gone on to become a major critical and financial success, winning three Oscars, including ones for the main stars, Katharine Hepburn and Henry Fonda.

Curtin had been running private yachts out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for about 15 years and had supplied boats for a TV production once. He was also an acknowledged expert on antique wooden boats. His vacation was cut short here when he made a deal with the movie people to coordinate all boats used in the film, not only the ones seen on screen, but the camera barges and workboats, too.

After the filming on Squam Lake and Winnepesaukee, Curtin purchased all the boats used in the movie, including the Thayer IV, a beautiful mahogany 22 foot Chris Craft Sportsman, built in 1950, one of the most popular models the company



*Restoring Golden Oldies*

Pat Curtin of Meredith, top photo, readies his antique mahogany Chris Craft, Thayer IV, used in the movie "On Golden Pond." Curtin coordinated all boats in the film, and purchased them after production was completed. The boat will be on display today at the Antique Boat Show at Weirs Beach and tomorrow at the Meredith Town Docks. In his Paus Bay workshop, lower photo, Curtin stands before three other mahogany boats in various stages of restoration.

# Antique Boats

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ever produced.

The Thayer IV, which has been spruced up a bit since the movie, will be on display this weekend at the Antique Boat Show at Weirs Beach today and at the Meredith Town Docks tomorrow. It has just returned from Sarasota, Florida, where it was shown at a Chris Craft dealers' convention last week.

Other crafts used in the film were a U.S. Mail Boat, the Mariah, a canoe, a small outboard, and a replica of the Thayer IV used as a prop to smash into the rocks in the film — all now owned by Curtin and in storage at his shop on Paugus Bay.

Curtin said he arranged for the prop boat's hull to break away easily for the filming by scoring an outline on the wood inside and by using a 5000-pound nitrogen ram with cables. The prop boat, also an old Chris Craft, wasn't much good to begin with though, Curtin said. At the proper time she sank right to the bottom of Squam Lake, otherwise known to the world as "Golden Pond."

Presently the prop is mounted on blocks in a dark corner of Curtin's work area, the hull still smashed to bits, a curiosity of the first order, no doubt, for movie buffs and trivia aficionados everywhere.

Curtin said working for the production company meant a 12 hour a day schedule, or more, seven days a week, from April to September. "They were super, a pleasure to work with," he added, noting he still maintains contact with Henry Fonda and his wife, Shirlee.

"Fonda is a gentleman, a very quiet, even shy man," Curtin said, although he is not well now physically, and will probably not work again.

Even people on the production crew, those who've been in pictures all their professional lives, knew how unique the situation was, with Fonda and his daughter, Jane, and Hepburn in the cast, and with the location so beautiful. "They're usually shooting out in some desert somewhere," Curtin added with a chuckle.

Production-wise, everything went off without a hitch, too, he added. "They told me you remember maybe three shows in your life, and this is one of them."

The Los Angeles-based staff was also very taken with the Lakes Region and the people. "They just loved it here," he said.

"Why?" Curtin is asked. "Have you ever been to Los Angeles?" he answered rhetorically, referring to the smog, bloated population, and frenetic life-style.

Testimony to Fonda's generosity was a painting he did for Hepburn. It was of three hats. The first was the one Hepburn had given him which had once belonged to Spencer Tracy. The other was the old fishing hat he had used in the film for his character "Norman Thayer," the third was the little boy's hat in the film.

For Christmas Fonda had numbered lithographic copies made of it, autographed them, and sent one to each member of the production staff as a memento.

Curtin has bought a home in Meredith and plans to stay in the Lakes Region. Florida and the West coast are too crowded for him, he says. Living here and the pressures of his very busy business, however, will not prevent him from staying in show biz, though. He's already at work coordinating boats for yet another Hollywood film.